Congressional Research Service
Informing the legislative debate since 1914

The 10-20-30 Provision: Defining Persistent Poverty Counties

Updated March 27, 2019

Congressional Research Service
https://crsreports.congress.gov
R45100

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Congressional Research Service
Informing the legislative debate since 1914

SUMMARY

R45100

March 27, 2019

Joseph Dalaker
Analyst in Social Policy

The 10-20-30 Provision: Defining Persistent Poverty Counties

Antipoverty interventions that provide resources to local communities, based on the characteristics of those communities, have been of interest to Congress. One such policy, dubbed the "10-20-30 provision," was implemented in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA, P.L. 111-5). Title I, Section 105 of ARRA required the Secretary of Agriculture to allocate at least 10% of funds from three rural development program accounts to persistent poverty counties; that is, to counties that have had poverty rates of 20% or more for the past 30 years, as measured by the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses. One notable characteristic of this provision is that it did not increase spending for the rural development programs addressed in ARRA, but rather targeted existing funds differently.

Research has suggested that areas for which the *poverty rate* (the percentage of the population that is below poverty) reaches 20% experience systemic problems that are more acute than in lower-poverty areas. Therefore, policy interventions at the community level (such as applying the 10-20-30 provision to other programs besides those cited in ARRA), and not only at the individual or family level, could continue to be of interest to Congress.

Poverty rates are computed using data from household surveys. The list of counties identified to be persistently poor may differ by roughly 70 to 100 counties in a particular year, depending on the surveys selected to compile the list and the rounding method used for the poverty rate estimates. Before the mid-1990s, the decennial census was the only source of county poverty estimates. However, currently, the only data sources that provide poverty estimates for all U.S. counties are the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program (SAIPE). Therefore, to determine whether an area is "persistently" poor in a time span that ends after the year 2000, it must first be decided whether ACS or SAIPE poverty estimates will be used for the later part of that time span.

When determining the rounding method and data source to be used to compile a list of persistent poverty counties, the following may be relevant to consider:

- Characteristics of interest: SAIPE is suited for poverty or median income alone; ACS for other topics in addition to poverty and income.
- Geographic areas of interest: SAIPE is recommended for counties and school districts only; ACS produces estimates for other small geographic areas as well.
- Reference period of estimate: SAIPE for one year; ACS for a five-year span.
- Rounding method for poverty rates: rounding to 20.0% (one decimal place) yields a shorter list than rounding to 20% (whole number).

Poverty status is not defined for all persons: foster children (unrelated individuals under age 15), institutionalized persons, and residents of college dormitories are excluded; the homeless are not targeted by household surveys; and areas with large numbers of students living off-campus may have high poverty rates.

Contents

Introduction 1
Motivation for Targeting Funds to Persistent Poverty Counties 2
Defining "Persistent Poverty" Counties 3
Computing the Poverty Rate for an Area 3
Data Sources Used in Identifying Persistent Poverty Counties 3
Considerations When Identifying and Targeting Persistent Poverty Counties 4
Selecting the Data Source: Strengths and Limitations of ACS and SAIPE Poverty Data 4
Characteristics of Interest: SAIPE for Poverty Alone; ACS for Other Topics in Addition to Poverty 4
Geographic Area of Interest: SAIPE for Counties and School Districts Only; ACS for Other Small Areas 4
Reference Period of Estimate: SAIPE for One Year, ACS for a Five-Year Span 5
Other Considerations 5
Treatment of Special Populations in the Official Poverty Definition 5
"Persistence" Versus Flexibility to Recent Situations 5
Effects of Rounding and Data Source Selection on Lists of Counties 6
Example List of Persistent Poverty Counties 8

Figures

Figure 1. Persistent Poverty Counties Using Two Rounding Methods, Based on 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates 22

Tables

Table 1. Number of Counties Identified as Persistently Poor, Using Different Datasets and Rounding Methods 6
Table 2. List of Persistent Poverty Counties, Based on 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), Using Poverty Rates of 19.5% or Greater 8

Table A-1. U.S. Census Bureau's Guidance on Poverty Data Sources by Geographic Level and Type of Estimate 25

Appendixes

Appendix. Details on the Data Sources 23

Contacts

Author Information..... 26

Introduction

Antipoverty interventions that provide resources to local communities, based on the characteristics of those communities, have been of interest to Congress. One such policy, dubbed the "10-20-30 provision," was implemented in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA, P.L. 111-5). Title I, Section 105 of ARRA required the Secretary of Agriculture to allocate at least 10% of funds provided in that act from three rural development program accounts to persistent poverty counties; that is, to counties that have had poverty rates of 20% or more for the past 30 years, as measured by the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses.[1]

One notable characteristic of this provision is that it did not increase spending for the rural development programs addressed in ARRA, but rather targeted existing funds differently. Given Congress's interest both in addressing poverty and being mindful about levels of federal spending, the past four Congresses included 10-20-30 language in multiple appropriations bills, some of which were enacted into law. However, the original language used in ARRA could not be used verbatim, because the data source used by ARRA to define persistent poverty—the decennial census—stopped collecting income information. As a consequence, the appropriations bills varied slightly in their definitions of "persistent poverty counties" as it was applied to various programs and departments, sometimes even within different sections of the same bill, if the bill included language on different programs. In turn, because the definitions of "persistent poverty" differed, so did the lists of counties identified as persistently poor and subject to the 10-20-30 provision. The bills included legislation for rural development, public works and economic development, technological innovation, and brownfields site assessment and remediation. Most recently, in the 116th Congress, much of the language used in these previous bills was included in P.L. 116-6 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019).[2]

This report discusses how data source selection, and the rounding of poverty estimates, can affect the list of counties identified as persistently poor. After briefly explaining why targeting funds to persistent poverty counties might be of interest, this report explores how "persistent poverty" is defined and measured, and how different interpretations of the definition and different data source selections could yield different lists of counties identified as persistently poor. This report does not compare the 10-20-30 provision's advantages and disadvantages against other policy options, nor does it examine the range of programs or policy goals for which the 10-20-30 provision might be an appropriate policy tool.

[1] While the 1980-2000 period is actually 20 years, local communities have traditionally relied upon the decennial census data for small areas up to 10 years after their publication, hence the reference to "30 years." However, since the late 1990s newer data sources have become available for small communities at intervals shorter than 10 years, which has implications that will be discussed in this report.

[2] In the 116th Congress, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6) included 10-20-30 language in numerous sections: Section 752, in reference to loans and grants for rural housing, business and economic development, and utilities; Section 539, in reference to grants authorized by the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 and grants authorized by section 27 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980; Division D, Title I, in reference to the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund Program Account; and Division E, Title II, in reference to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 and its role in authorizing funding for brownfields site assessment and remediation. The sections varied in the data sources used to define "persistent poverty counties," which means the sections varied in the lists of counties targeted for the funding set-aside.

Motivation for Targeting Funds to Persistent Poverty Counties

Research has suggested that areas for which the *poverty rate* (the percentage of the population that is below poverty) reaches 20% experience systemic problems that are more acute than in lower-poverty areas. The poverty rate of 20% as a critical point has been discussed in academic literature as relevant for examining social characteristics of high-poverty versus low-poverty areas.[3] For instance, property values in high-poverty areas do not yield as high a return on investment as in low-poverty areas, and that low return provides a financial disincentive for property owners to spend money on maintaining and improving property.[4] The ill effects of high poverty rates have been documented both for urban and rural areas.[5] Therefore, policy interventions at the community level, and not only at the individual or family level, have been and may continue to be of interest to Congress.[6]

---

[3] For instance, George Galster of Wayne State University conducted a literature review that suggested "that the independent impacts of neighborhood poverty rates in encouraging negative outcomes for individuals like crime, school leaving, and duration of poverty spells appear to be nil unless the neighborhood exceeds about 20 percent poverty." Galster distinguishes the effects of living in a poor neighborhood from the effects of being poor oneself but not necessarily in a poor neighborhood. Cited in George C. Galster, "The Mechanism(s) of Neighborhood Effects: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications," presented at the Economic and Social Research Council Seminar, "Neighbourhood Effects: Theory & Evidence," St. Andrews University, Scotland, UK, February 2010.

Additionally, the Census Bureau has published a series of reports examining local areas (census tracts) with poverty rates of 20% or greater. See, for instance, Alemayehu Bishaw, "Changes in Areas With Concentrated Poverty: 2000 to 2010," U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Reports ACS-27, June 2014; and Leatha Lamison-White, "Poverty Areas," U.S. Census Bureau Statistical Brief, June 1995.

[4] The effects of poverty rates on property values are explored by George C. Galster, Jackie M. Cutsinger, and Ron Malega in "The Costs of Concentrated Poverty: Neighborhood Property Markets and the Dynamics of Decline," pp. 93-113 in N. Retsinas and E. Belsky, eds., *Revisiting Rental Housing: Policies, Programs, and Priorities* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008). They indicate that "the relationship between changes in a neighborhood's poverty rate and maintenance choices by local residential property owners will be lumpy and non-linear. Substantial variations in poverty rates in the low-moderate range yield no deviations in the owner's decision to highly maintain the building.... Past some percentage of poverty, however, the owner will switch to an undermaintenance mode whereby net depreciation will occur."

[5] See, for instance, a 2008 report issued jointly by the Federal Reserve System and the Brookings Institution, "The Enduring Challenge of Concentrated Poverty in America: Case Studies from Communities Across the U.S.," David Erickson et al., eds., 2008. Additional research into concentrated poverty in both rural and urban areas has been undertaken for decades; for example, educational attainment and health disability were discussed in a rural context by Calvin Beale in "Income and Poverty," chapter 11 in Glenn V. Fuguitt, David L. Brown, and Calvin L. Beale, eds., *Rural and Small Town America*, Russell Sage Foundation, 1988.

[6] In the 116th Congress, P.L. 116-6 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2019) used the 10-20-30 provision; see footnote 2 for details. Of the public laws passed by the 115th Congress, 10-20-30 language was included in P.L. 115-31 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017), P.L. 115-141 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018), and P.L. 115-334 (Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018). Multiple other bills were introduced but not enacted into public law. In the 114th Congress, no bills containing 10-20-30 language were enacted into public law, but 10-20-30 language was included in H.R. 1360 (America's FOCUS Act of 2015), H.R. 5393 (Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017), H.R. 5054 (Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017), H.R. 5538 (Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017), and S. 3067 and H.R. 5485 (Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2017). However, the Consolidated Appropriations Acts for 2017, 2018, and 2019 used language analogous to the bills introduced in the 114th Congress, with some modification. Additionally, in the 113th Congress, H.R. 5571 (The 10-20-30 Act of 2014) was introduced and referred to committee but not passed.

Defining "Persistent Poverty" Counties

Persistent poverty counties are counties that have had poverty rates of 20% or greater for at least 30 years. The county poverty rates for 1999 and previous years are measured using decennial census data, and for more recent years, either the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) or the American Community Survey (ACS). The data sources used, and the level of precision of rounding for the poverty rate, affects the list of counties identified as persistent poverty counties, as will be described below.

Computing the Poverty Rate for an Area

Poverty rates are computed by the Census Bureau for the nation, states, and smaller geographic areas such as counties.[7] The official definition of poverty in the United States is based on the money income of families and unrelated individuals. Income from each family member (if family members are present) is added together and compared against a dollar amount called a *poverty threshold,* which represents a level of economic hardship and varies according to the size and characteristics of the family (ranging from one person to nine persons or more). Families (or unrelated individuals) whose income is less than their respective poverty threshold are considered to be in poverty.[8]

Every person in a family has the same poverty status. Thus, it is possible to compute a poverty rate based on counts of persons (dividing the number of persons below poverty within a county by the county's total population,[9] and multiplying by 100 to express as a percentage).

Data Sources Used in Identifying Persistent Poverty Counties

Poverty rates are computed using data from household surveys. Currently, the only data sources that provide poverty estimates for all U.S. counties are the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program (SAIPE). Before the mid-1990s, the only poverty data available at the county level came from the Decennial Census of Population and Housing, which was only collected once every 10 years, and used to be the only source of estimates that could determine whether a county had persistently high poverty rates (ARRA referred explicitly to decennial census poverty estimates for that purpose). However, after Census 2000, the decennial census no longer collects income information, and as a result cannot be used to compute poverty estimates. Therefore, to determine whether an area is persistently poor in a

[7] There are actually two definitions of poverty used in the United States: one for statistical purposes, which is used by the Census Bureau and described in Statistical Policy Directive 14 by the Office of Management and Budget; and the other for administrative purposes, which is used by the Department of Health and Human Services and is referred to in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. Measuring the poverty rates of counties, which are in turn used in the 10-20-30 plan, is a statistical use of poverty data; thus, the statistical definition of poverty (used by the Census Bureau) applies.

[8] For further details about the official definition of poverty, see CRS Report R44780, *An Introduction to Poverty Measurement*, by Joseph Dalaker.

[9] Poverty rates are computed using adjusted population totals because there are some individuals whose poverty status is not determined. These include unrelated individuals under age 15, such as foster children, who are not asked income questions and who are not related to anyone else in their residence by birth, marriage, or adoption; persons living in military barracks; and persons in institutions such as nursing homes or prisons. Some surveys (such as those described in this report) do not compute poverty status for persons living in college dormitories. These persons are excluded from the total population when computing poverty rates. Furthermore, people who have no traditional housing and who do not live in shelters are typically not sampled in household surveys.

time span that ends after 2000, it must first be decided whether ACS or SAIPE poverty estimates will be used for the later part of that time span.

The ACS and the SAIPE program serve different purposes. The ACS was developed to provide continuous measurement of a wide range of topics similar to that formerly provided by the decennial census long form, available down to the local community level. ACS data for all counties are available annually, but are based on responses over the previous five-year time span (e.g., 2013-2017). The SAIPE program was developed specifically for estimating poverty at the county level for school-age children and for the overall population, for use in funding allocations for the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382). SAIPE data are also available annually, and reflect one calendar year, not five. However, unlike the ACS, SAIPE does not provide estimates for a wide array of topics. For further details about the data sources for county poverty estimates, see the **Appendix**.

Considerations When Identifying and Targeting Persistent Poverty Counties

Selecting the Data Source: Strengths and Limitations of ACS and SAIPE Poverty Data

Because poverty estimates can be obtained from multiple data sources, the Census Bureau has provided guidance on the most suitable data source to use for various purposes.[10]

Characteristics of Interest: SAIPE for Poverty Alone; ACS for Other Topics in Addition to Poverty

The Census Bureau recommends using SAIPE poverty estimates when estimates are needed at the county level, especially for counties with small populations, and when additional demographic and economic detail is not needed at that level.[11] When additional detail is required, such as for county-level poverty estimates by race and Hispanic origin, detailed age groups (aside from the elementary and secondary school-age population), housing characteristics, or education level, the ACS is the data source recommended by the Census Bureau.

Geographic Area of Interest: SAIPE for Counties and School Districts Only; ACS for Other Small Areas

For counties (and school districts) of small population size, SAIPE data have an advantage over ACS data in that the SAIPE model uses administrative data to help reduce the uncertainty of the estimates. However, ACS estimates are available for a wider array of geographic levels, such as ZIP code tabulation areas, census tracts (subcounty areas of roughly 1,200 to 8,000 people), cities and towns, and greater metropolitan areas.

[10] This guidance is posted on the Census Bureau's website at https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources.html, and is reproduced in the **Appendix**.

[11] SAIPE county-level estimates are available for the poverty status of the total population, persons under age 18, and related children ages 5 to 17 living in families, and for median household income.

Reference Period of Estimate: SAIPE for One Year, ACS for a Five-Year Span

While the ACS has greater flexibility in the topics measured and the geographic areas provided, it can only provide estimates in five-year ranges for the smallest geographic areas. Five years of survey responses are needed to obtain a sample large enough to produce meaningful estimates for populations below 65,000 persons. In this sense the SAIPE data, because they are based on a single year, are more current than the data of the ACS. The distinction has to do with the reference period of the data—both data sources release data on an annual basis; the ACS estimates for small areas are based on the prior five years, not the prior year alone.

Other Considerations

Treatment of Special Populations in the Official Poverty Definition

Poverty status is not defined for persons in institutions, such as nursing homes or prisons, nor for persons residing in military barracks. These populations are excluded from totals when computing poverty statistics. Furthermore, the homeless population is not counted explicitly in poverty statistics. The ACS is a household survey, thus homeless individuals who are not in shelters are not counted. SAIPE estimates are partially based on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administrative data and tax data, so the part of the homeless population that either filed tax returns or received SNAP benefits might be reflected in the estimates, but only implicitly.

In the decennial census, ACS, and SAIPE estimates, poverty status also is not defined for persons living in college dormitories.[12] However, students who live in off-campus housing are included. Because college students tend to have lower money income (which does not include school loans) than average, counties that have large populations of students living off-campus may exhibit higher poverty rates than one might expect given other economic measures for the area, such as the unemployment rate.[13]

Given the ways that the special populations above either are or are not reflected in poverty statistics, it may be worthwhile to consider whether counties that have large numbers of people in those populations would receive an equitable allocation of funds. Other economic measures may be of use, depending on the type of program for which funds are being targeted.

"Persistence" Versus Flexibility to Recent Situations

The 10-20-30 provision was developed to identify counties with persistently high poverty rates. Therefore, using that funding approach by itself would not allow flexibility to target counties that have recently experienced economic hardship, such as counties that had a large manufacturing

[12] Details on the poverty universe in the ACS are available at https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2016_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf#page=108 and for the SAIPE estimates at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/guidance/model-input-data/denominators/poverty.html.

[13] For some counties, the percentage-point difference could be large when off-campus students are excluded. Using ACS data for 2009-2011, Whitman County, WA, experienced the largest poverty rate difference among all counties when off-campus students were excluded—its poverty rate fell by 16.5 percentage points. For the United States as a whole, the poverty rate fell from 15.2% to 14.5% when off-campus students were excluded (based on the same dataset). For details, see Alemayehu Bishaw, "Examining the Effect of Off-Campus College Students on Poverty Rates," Working Paper SEHSD 2013-17, U.S. Census Bureau, May 1, 2013.

plant close within the past three years. Other interventions besides the 10-20-30 provision may be more appropriate for counties that have had a recent spike in the poverty rate.

Effects of Rounding and Data Source Selection on Lists of Counties

In ARRA, persistent poverty counties were defined as "any county that has had 20 percent or more of its population living in poverty over the past 30 years, as measured by the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses."[14] Poverty rates published by the Census Bureau are typically reported to one decimal place. The numeral used in the ARRA language was the whole number 20. Thus, for any collection of poverty data, there are two reasonable approaches to compiling a list of persistent poverty counties: using poverty rates of at least 20.0% in all three years, or using poverty rates that *round up* to the whole number 20% or greater in all three years (i.e., poverty rates of 19.5% or more in all three years). The former approach is more restrictive and results in a shorter list of counties; the latter approach is more inclusive.

Table 1 illustrates the number of counties identified as persistent poverty counties using the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, and various ACS and SAIPE datasets for the last data point, under both rounding schemes. The rounding method and data source selection can each have large impacts on the number of counties listed. Approximately 30 more counties appear in SAIPE-based lists compared to ACS-based lists using the same rounding method. Compared to using 20.0% as the cutoff (rounded to one decimal place), rounding up to 20% from 19.5% adds approximately 50 to 60 counties to the list. Taking both the data source and the rounding method together, the list of persistent poverty counties could vary by roughly 70 to 100 counties in a given year depending on the method used.

Table 1. Number of Counties Identified as Persistently Poor, Using Different Datasets and Rounding Methods

Counties identified as having poverty rates of 20% or more (applying rounding methods as indicated below) in 1989 (from 1990 Census), 1999 (from Census 2000), and latest year from datasets indicated below.

Dataset	Rounded to One Decimal Place (20.0% or Greater)	Rounded to Whole Number (19.5% or Greater)	Difference Between Rounding Methods
ACS, 2007-2011	397	445	48
ACS, 2008-2012	404	456	52
ACS, 2009-2013	402	458	56
ACS, 2010-2014	401	456	55
ACS, 2011-2015	397	453	56
ACS, 2012-2016	392	446	54
ACS, 2013-2017	386	436	50
			Mean difference: 53.00
SAIPE, 2011	433	495	62

[14] P.L. 111-5, Section 105.

Dataset	Rounded to One Decimal Place (20.0% or Greater)	Rounded to Whole Number (19.5% or Greater)	Difference Between Rounding Methods
SAIPE, 2012	435	491	56
SAIPE, 2013	427	490	63
SAIPE, 2014	427	486	59
SAIPE, 2015	419	476	57
SAIPE, 2016	420	469	49
SAIPE, 2017	411	460	49
			Mean difference: 56.43
Differences between datasets released in same year			
Difference, SAIPE 2011 minus ACS 2007-2011	36	50	
Difference, SAIPE 2012 minus ACS 2008-2012	31	35	
Difference, SAIPE 2013 minus ACS 2009-2013	25	32	
Difference, SAIPE 2014 minus ACS 2010-2014	26	30	
Difference, SAIPE 2015 minus ACS 2011-2015	22	23	
Difference, SAIPE 2016 minus ACS 2012-2016	28	23	
Difference, SAIPE 2017 minus ACS 2013-2017	25	24	
Mean difference	27.57	31.00	

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Census 2000, 2012-2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2007-2011, 2008-2012, 2009-2013, 2010-2014, 2011-2015, 2012-2016, and 2013-2017.

Notes: ACS: American Community Survey. SAIPE: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates. Comparisons between ACS and SAIPE estimates are between datasets released in the same year (both are typically released in December of the year following the reference period). There are 3,143 county-type areas in the United States.

The selection of the data source and rounding method has a large effect on the number of counties identified as being in persistent poverty. The longest list of persistent poverty counties (SAIPE, 19.5% or greater, that is, rounded up to the whole number 20%) minus the shortest list of persistent poverty counties (ACS, 20.0% or greater) yields the maximum difference. Comparing datasets that were released in the same year, the maximum differences in the lists of counties were the following:

SAIPE 2011, whole number - ACS, 2007-2011, one decimal = 98 counties
SAIPE 2012, whole number - ACS, 2008-2012, one decimal = 87
SAIPE 2013, whole number - ACS, 2009-2013, one decimal = 88
SAIPE 2014, whole number - ACS, 2010-2014, one decimal = 85
SAIPE 2015, whole number - ACS, 2011-2015, one decimal = 79
SAIPE 2016, whole number - ACS, 2012-2016, one decimal = 77
SAIPE 2017, whole number - ACS, 2013-2017, one decimal = 74

The lists of persistent poverty counties vary by about 84 counties on average (mean: 84.00), depending on which data source is used for the last data point in the 30-year span, and which rounding method is applied to identify persistent poverty.

Example List of Persistent Poverty Counties

The list of persistent poverty counties below (**Table 2**) is based on data from the 1990 Census, Census 2000, and the 2017 SAIPE estimates, and included counties with poverty rates of 19.5% or greater (that is, counties with poverty rates that were at least 20% with rounding applied to the whole number). These same counties are mapped in **Figure 1**.

Table 2. List of Persistent Poverty Counties, Based on 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), Using Poverty Rates of 19.5% or Greater

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
1	01005	Alabama	Barbour	2	25.2	26.8	33.4
2	01007	Alabama	Bibb	6	21.2	20.6	20.2
3	01011	Alabama	Bullock	2	36.5	33.5	34.4
4	01013	Alabama	Butler	2	31.5	24.6	21.3
5	01023	Alabama	Choctaw	7	30.2	24.5	23.7
6	01025	Alabama	Clarke	1,7	25.9	22.6	23.3
7	01035	Alabama	Conecuh	2	29.7	26.6	23.7
8	01041	Alabama	Crenshaw	2	24.3	22.1	19.9
9	01047	Alabama	Dallas	7	36.2	31.1	27.9
10	01053	Alabama	Escambia	1	28.1	20.9	23.3
11	01061	Alabama	Geneva	2	19.5	19.6	21.7
12	01063	Alabama	Greene	7	45.6	34.3	33.2
13	01065	Alabama	Hale	7	35.6	26.9	25.1
14	01085	Alabama	Lowndes	7	38.6	31.4	25.9
15	01087	Alabama	Macon	3	34.5	32.8	30.6
16	01091	Alabama	Marengo	7	30.0	25.9	22.8
17	01099	Alabama	Monroe	1	22.7	21.3	23.8
18	01105	Alabama	Perry	7	42.6	35.4	37.2
19	01107	Alabama	Pickens	7	28.9	24.9	22.3
20	01109	Alabama	Pike	2	27.2	23.1	27.7
21	01113	Alabama	Russell	3	20.4	19.9	23.2
22	01119	Alabama	Sumter	7	39.7	38.7	35.9
23	01131	Alabama	Wilcox	7	45.2	39.9	32.0
24	02050	Alaska	Bethel Census Area	at large	30.0	20.6	28.7
25	02070	Alaska	Dillingham Census Area	at large	24.6	21.4	20.8

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
26	02158	Alaska	Kusilvak Census Area[b]	at large	31.0	26.2	37.5
27	02290	Alaska	Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	at large	26.0	23.8	23.2
28	04001	Arizona	Apache	1	47.1	37.8	33.1
29	04009	Arizona	Graham	1	26.7	23.0	20.9
30	04012	Arizona	La Paz	4	28.2	19.6	20.9
31	04017	Arizona	Navajo	1	34.7	29.5	26.4
32	04023	Arizona	Santa Cruz	3	26.4	24.5	23.6
33	05011	Arkansas	Bradley	4	24.9	26.3	20.9
34	05017	Arkansas	Chicot	1	40.4	28.6	30.1
35	05027	Arkansas	Columbia	4	24.4	21.1	25.5
36	05035	Arkansas	Crittenden	1	27.1	25.3	21.1
37	05041	Arkansas	Desha	1	34.0	28.9	29.0
38	05057	Arkansas	Hempstead	4	22.7	20.3	24.2
39	05069	Arkansas	Jefferson	1,4	23.9	20.5	23.5
40	05073	Arkansas	Lafayette	4	34.7	23.2	24.1
41	05077	Arkansas	Lee	1	47.3	29.9	37.3
42	05079	Arkansas	Lincoln	1	26.2	19.5	23.4
43	05093	Arkansas	Mississippi	1	26.2	23.0	24.3
44	05095	Arkansas	Monroe	1	35.9	27.5	27.3
45	05099	Arkansas	Nevada	4	20.3	22.8	19.5
46	05101	Arkansas	Newton	3,4	29.6	20.4	19.8
47	05103	Arkansas	Ouachita	4	21.2	19.5	19.9
48	05107	Arkansas	Phillips	1	43.0	32.7	39.8
49	05111	Arkansas	Poinsett	1	25.6	21.2	21.0
50	05123	Arkansas	St. Francis	1	36.6	27.5	33.7
51	05129	Arkansas	Searcy	1,3	29.9	23.8	21.6
52	05147	Arkansas	Woodruff	1	34.5	27.0	26.8
53	06019	California	Fresno	4,16,21,22	21.4	22.9	21.1
54	06025	California	Imperial	51	23.8	22.6	20.7
55	06047	California	Merced	16	19.9	21.7	23.0
56	06107	California	Tulare	21,22,23	22.6	23.9	24.0
57	08003	Colorado	Alamosa	3	24.8	21.3	21.3
58	08011	Colorado	Bent	4	20.4	19.5	32.0
59	08021	Colorado	Conejos	3	33.9	23.0	21.2

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
60	08023	Colorado	Costilla	3	34.6	26.8	27.3
61	08109	Colorado	Saguache	3	30.6	22.6	24.4
62	12001	Florida	Alachua	3	23.5	22.8	21.2
63	12039	Florida	Gadsden	5	28.0	19.9	23.1
64	12047	Florida	Hamilton	5	27.8	26.0	24.0
65	12049	Florida	Hardee	17	22.8	24.6	23.3
66	12079	Florida	Madison	5	25.9	23.1	28.3
67	12107	Florida	Putnam	3	20.0	20.9	26.3
68	13003	Georgia	Atkinson	8	26.0	23.0	24.2
69	13005	Georgia	Bacon	1	24.1	23.7	28.2
70	13007	Georgia	Baker	2	24.8	23.4	24.6
71	13017	Georgia	Ben Hill	8	22.0	22.3	24.5
72	13027	Georgia	Brooks	8	25.9	23.4	23.7
73	13031	Georgia	Bulloch	12	27.5	24.5	24.6
74	13033	Georgia	Burke	12	30.3	28.7	23.1
75	13037	Georgia	Calhoun	2	31.8	26.5	35.1
76	13043	Georgia	Candler	12	24.1	26.1	24.7
77	13059	Georgia	Clarke	9,10	27.0	28.3	26.6
78	13061	Georgia	Clay	2	35.7	31.3	33.1
79	13065	Georgia	Clinch	1	26.4	23.4	27.6
80	13071	Georgia	Colquitt	8	22.8	19.8	25.6
81	13075	Georgia	Cook	8	22.4	20.7	21.3
82	13081	Georgia	Crisp	2	29.0	29.3	29.7
83	13087	Georgia	Decatur	2	23.3	22.7	21.9
84	13093	Georgia	Dooly	2	32.9	22.1	27.6
85	13095	Georgia	Dougherty	2	24.4	24.8	28.2
86	13099	Georgia	Early	2	31.4	25.7	26.7
87	13107	Georgia	Emanuel	12	25.7	27.4	27.6
88	13109	Georgia	Evans	12	25.4	27.0	28.0
89	13131	Georgia	Grady	2	22.3	21.3	20.3
90	13141	Georgia	Hancock	10	30.1	29.4	30.3
91	13163	Georgia	Jefferson	10	31.3	23.0	24.0
92	13165	Georgia	Jenkins	12	27.8	28.4	32.8
93	13167	Georgia	Johnson	10	22.2	22.6	29.0
94	13193	Georgia	Macon	2	29.2	25.8	29.6

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
95	13197	Georgia	Marion	2	28.2	22.4	23.9
96	13201	Georgia	Miller	2	22.1	21.2	23.8
97	13205	Georgia	Mitchell	2	28.7	26.4	27.5
98	13209	Georgia	Montgomery	12	24.5	19.9	20.5
99	13225	Georgia	Peach	2	24.0	20.2	19.6
100	13239	Georgia	Quitman	2	33.0	21.9	26.1
101	13243	Georgia	Randolph	2	35.9	27.7	33.6
102	13251	Georgia	Screven	12	22.9	20.1	20.5
103	13253	Georgia	Seminole	2	29.1	23.2	29.2
104	13259	Georgia	Stewart	2	31.4	22.2	36.2
105	13261	Georgia	Sumter	2	24.8	21.4	25.5
106	13263	Georgia	Talbot	2	24.9	24.2	22.2
107	13265	Georgia	Taliaferro	10	31.9	23.4	26.5
108	13267	Georgia	Tattnall	12	21.9	23.9	27.3
109	13269	Georgia	Taylor	2	29.5	26.0	23.7
110	13271	Georgia	Telfair	8	27.3	21.2	34.6
111	13273	Georgia	Terrell	2	29.1	28.6	33.0
112	13277	Georgia	Tift	8	22.9	19.9	21.7
113	13279	Georgia	Toombs	12	24.0	23.9	22.3
114	13283	Georgia	Treutlen	12	27.1	26.3	27.4
115	13287	Georgia	Turner	8	31.3	26.7	27.6
116	13289	Georgia	Twiggs	8	26.0	19.7	22.2
117	13299	Georgia	Ware	1	21.1	20.5	22.0
118	13301	Georgia	Warren	10	32.6	27.0	27.9
119	13303	Georgia	Washington	10	21.6	22.9	26.7
120	13309	Georgia	Wheeler	12	30.3	25.3	37.4
121	13315	Georgia	Wilcox	8	28.6	21.0	30.7
122	17003	Illinois	Alexander	12	32.2	26.1	30.3
123	17077	Illinois	Jackson	12	28.4	25.2	29.2
124	17153	Illinois	Pulaski	12	30.2	24.7	22.9
125	20161	Kansas	Riley	1	21.2	20.6	20.4
126	21001	Kentucky	Adair	1	25.1	24.0	22.5
127	21011	Kentucky	Bath	6	27.3	21.9	23.0
128	21013	Kentucky	Bell	5	36.2	31.1	36.7
129	21025	Kentucky	Breathitt	5	39.5	33.2	36.2

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
130	21043	Kentucky	Carter	5	26.8	22.3	28.2
131	21045	Kentucky	Casey	1	29.4	25.5	25.1
132	21051	Kentucky	Clay	5	40.2	39.7	41.7
133	21053	Kentucky	Clinton	1	38.1	25.8	26.4
134	21057	Kentucky	Cumberland	1	31.6	23.8	22.8
135	21063	Kentucky	Elliott	5	38.0	25.9	29.7
136	21065	Kentucky	Estill	6	29.0	26.4	24.8
137	21071	Kentucky	Floyd	5	31.2	30.3	32.2
138	21075	Kentucky	Fulton	1	30.3	23.1	29.0
139	21095	Kentucky	Harlan	5	33.1	32.5	41.5
140	21099	Kentucky	Hart	2	27.1	22.4	20.0
141	21109	Kentucky	Jackson	5	38.2	30.2	31.4
142	21115	Kentucky	Johnson	5	28.7	26.6	23.3
143	21119	Kentucky	Knott	5	40.4	31.1	34.6
144	21121	Kentucky	Knox	5	38.9	34.8	32.2
145	21125	Kentucky	Laurel	5	24.8	21.3	24.3
146	21127	Kentucky	Lawrence	5	36.0	30.7	32.8
147	21129	Kentucky	Lee	5	37.4	30.4	33.7
148	21131	Kentucky	Leslie	5	35.6	32.7	31.0
149	21133	Kentucky	Letcher	5	31.8	27.1	30.8
150	21135	Kentucky	Lewis	4	30.7	28.5	25.6
151	21137	Kentucky	Lincoln	5	27.2	21.1	21.0
152	21147	Kentucky	McCreary	5	45.5	32.2	34.4
153	21153	Kentucky	Magoffin	5	42.5	36.6	32.1
154	21159	Kentucky	Martin	5	35.4	37.0	35.8
155	21165	Kentucky	Menifee	6	35.0	29.6	25.4
156	21169	Kentucky	Metcalfe	1	27.9	23.6	23.4
157	21171	Kentucky	Monroe	1	26.9	23.4	24.3
158	21175	Kentucky	Morgan	5	38.8	27.2	30.1
159	21189	Kentucky	Owsley	5	52.1	45.4	36.8
160	21193	Kentucky	Perry	5	32.1	29.1	25.9
161	21195	Kentucky	Pike	5	25.4	23.4	28.8
162	21197	Kentucky	Powell	6	26.2	23.5	24.6
163	21201	Kentucky	Robertson	6	24.8	22.2	21.1
164	21203	Kentucky	Rockcastle	5	30.7	23.1	21.3

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
165	21205	Kentucky	Rowan	5	28.9	21.3	23.7
166	21207	Kentucky	Russell	1	25.6	24.3	23.3
167	21231	Kentucky	Wayne	5	37.3	29.4	24.9
168	21235	Kentucky	Whitley	5	33.0	26.4	26.5
169	21237	Kentucky	Wolfe	6	44.3	35.9	29.9
170	22001	Louisiana	Acadia Parish	3	30.5	24.5	23.1
171	22003	Louisiana	Allen Parish	4	29.9	19.9	20.8
172	22009	Louisiana	Avoyelles Parish	5	37.1	25.9	24.6
173	22013	Louisiana	Bienville Parish	4	31.2	26.1	25.4
174	22017	Louisiana	Caddo Parish	4	24.0	21.1	25.8
175	22021	Louisiana	Caldwell Parish	5	28.8	21.2	23.4
176	22025	Louisiana	Catahoula Parish	5	36.8	28.1	27.8
177	22027	Louisiana	Claiborne Parish	4	32.0	26.5	39.5
178	22029	Louisiana	Concordia Parish	5	30.6	29.1	27.7
179	22031	Louisiana	De Soto Parish	4	29.8	25.1	22.8
180	22035	Louisiana	East Carroll Parish	5	56.8	40.5	46.7
181	22037	Louisiana	East Feliciana Parish	5,6	25.0	23.0	20.6
182	22039	Louisiana	Evangeline Parish	4	35.1	32.2	23.6
183	22041	Louisiana	Franklin Parish	5	34.5	28.4	27.9
184	22043	Louisiana	Grant Parish	5	25.5	21.5	21.0
185	22045	Louisiana	Iberia Parish	3	25.8	23.6	23.8
186	22047	Louisiana	Iberville Parish	2,6	28.0	23.1	22.9
187	22049	Louisiana	Jackson Parish	5	23.9	19.8	24.6
188	22061	Louisiana	Lincoln Parish	5	26.6	26.5	27.9
189	22065	Louisiana	Madison Parish	5	44.6	36.7	38.9
190	22067	Louisiana	Morehouse Parish	5	31.0	26.8	28.0
191	22069	Louisiana	Natchitoches Parish	4	33.9	26.5	30.3
192	22071	Louisiana	Orleans Parish	1,2	31.6	27.9	26.1
193	22073	Louisiana	Ouachita Parish	5	24.7	20.7	24.7
194	22079	Louisiana	Rapides Parish	5	22.6	20.5	19.9
195	22081	Louisiana	Red River Parish	4	35.1	29.9	23.3
196	22083	Louisiana	Richland Parish	5	33.2	27.9	27.8
197	22085	Louisiana	Sabine Parish	4	27.1	21.5	22.2
198	22091	Louisiana	St. Helena Parish	5,6	34.4	26.8	23.2
199	22097	Louisiana	St. Landry Parish	3,4,5	36.3	29.3	25.6

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
200	22101	Louisiana	St. Mary Parish	3	27.0	23.6	20.5
201	22105	Louisiana	Tangipahoa Parish	1,5	31.5	22.7	20.9
202	22107	Louisiana	Tensas Parish	5	46.3	36.3	34.9
203	22117	Louisiana	Washington Parish	5	31.6	24.7	23.1
204	22119	Louisiana	Webster Parish	4	25.1	20.2	20.3
205	22123	Louisiana	West Carroll Parish	5	27.4	23.4	21.2
206	22125	Louisiana	West Feliciana Parish	5	33.8	19.9	21.0
207	22127	Louisiana	Winn Parish	5	27.5	21.5	23.7
208	24510	Maryland	Baltimore city	2,3,7	21.9	22.9	22.1
209	26073	Michigan	Isabella	4	24.9	20.4	23.8
210	28001	Mississippi	Adams	3	30.5	25.9	32.5
211	28005	Mississippi	Amite	3	30.9	22.6	23.3
212	28007	Mississippi	Attala	2	30.2	21.8	24.1
213	28009	Mississippi	Benton	1	29.7	23.2	21.8
214	28011	Mississippi	Bolivar	2	42.9	33.3	32.4
215	28019	Mississippi	Choctaw	1	25.0	24.7	22.1
216	28021	Mississippi	Claiborne	2	43.6	32.4	42.6
217	28023	Mississippi	Clarke	3,4	23.4	23.0	20.8
218	28025	Mississippi	Clay	1	25.9	23.5	25.4
219	28027	Mississippi	Coahoma	2	45.5	35.9	34.8
220	28029	Mississippi	Copiah	2	32.0	25.1	22.5
221	28031	Mississippi	Covington	3	31.2	23.5	23.0
222	28035	Mississippi	Forrest	4	27.5	22.5	22.7
223	28037	Mississippi	Franklin	3	33.3	24.1	20.6
224	28041	Mississippi	Greene	4	26.8	19.6	21.7
225	28043	Mississippi	Grenada	2	22.3	20.9	20.4
226	28049	Mississippi	Hinds	2,3	21.2	19.9	20.2
227	28051	Mississippi	Holmes	2	53.2	41.1	40.8
228	28053	Mississippi	Humphreys	2	45.9	38.2	38.4
229	28055	Mississippi	Issaquena	2	49.3	33.2	38.1
230	28061	Mississippi	Jasper	3	30.7	22.7	23.8
231	28063	Mississippi	Jefferson	2	46.9	36.0	34.1
232	28065	Mississippi	Jefferson Davis	3	33.3	28.2	28.7
233	28067	Mississippi	Jones	4	22.7	19.8	21.3
234	28069	Mississippi	Kemper	3	35.1	26.0	29.8

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
235	28071	Mississippi	Lafayette	1	25.1	21.3	21.1
236	28075	Mississippi	Lauderdale	3	22.8	20.8	20.5
237	28077	Mississippi	Lawrence	3	27.9	19.6	19.7
238	28079	Mississippi	Leake	2	29.6	23.3	21.7
239	28083	Mississippi	Leflore	2	38.9	34.8	42.2
240	28087	Mississippi	Lowndes	1	22.1	21.3	22.2
241	28091	Mississippi	Marion	4	29.6	24.8	24.7
242	28093	Mississippi	Marshall	1	30.0	21.9	22.8
243	28097	Mississippi	Montgomery	2	34.0	24.3	23.2
244	28099	Mississippi	Neshoba	3	26.6	21.0	22.4
245	28101	Mississippi	Newton	3	20.9	19.9	20.4
246	28103	Mississippi	Noxubee	3	41.4	32.8	34.5
247	28105	Mississippi	Oktibbeha	1,3	30.1	28.2	25.5
248	28107	Mississippi	Panola	2	33.8	25.3	22.7
249	28111	Mississippi	Perry	4	29.1	22.0	20.5
250	28113	Mississippi	Pike	3	32.9	25.3	28.0
251	28119	Mississippi	Quitman	2	41.6	33.1	40.9
252	28123	Mississippi	Scott	3	27.4	20.7	21.9
253	28125	Mississippi	Sharkey	2	47.5	38.3	35.5
254	28127	Mississippi	Simpson	3	22.7	21.6	23.0
255	28133	Mississippi	Sunflower	2	41.8	30.0	36.2
256	28135	Mississippi	Tallahatchie	2	41.9	32.2	35.2
257	28143	Mississippi	Tunica	2	56.8	33.1	29.1
258	28147	Mississippi	Walthall	3	35.9	27.8	26.1
259	28151	Mississippi	Washington	2	33.8	29.2	32.7
260	28153	Mississippi	Wayne	4	29.5	25.4	23.0
261	28157	Mississippi	Wilkinson	3	42.2	37.7	33.1
262	28159	Mississippi	Winston	1	26.6	23.7	22.5
263	28161	Mississippi	Yalobusha	2	26.4	21.8	21.3
264	28163	Mississippi	Yazoo	2	39.2	31.9	33.9
265	29001	Missouri	Adair	6	24.9	23.3	25.6
266	29035	Missouri	Carter	8	27.6	25.2	20.9
267	29069	Missouri	Dunklin	8	29.9	24.5	24.6
268	29133	Missouri	Mississippi	8	29.7	23.7	28.5
269	29143	Missouri	New Madrid	8	26.9	22.1	25.4

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
270	29149	Missouri	Oregon	8	27.4	22.0	24.3
271	29153	Missouri	Ozark	8	22.1	21.6	21.5
272	29155	Missouri	Pemiscot	8	35.8	30.4	26.4
273	29179	Missouri	Reynolds	8	24.2	20.1	20.4
274	29181	Missouri	Ripley	8	31.5	22.0	23.9
275	29185	Missouri	St. Clair	4	22.4	19.6	20.4
276	29203	Missouri	Shannon	8	24.1	26.9	35.9
277	29215	Missouri	Texas	8	22.9	21.4	21.2
278	29221	Missouri	Washington	8	27.2	20.8	22.8
279	29223	Missouri	Wayne	8	29.0	21.9	22.9
280	29229	Missouri	Wright	8	25.3	21.7	24.3
281	29510	Missouri	St. Louis city	1	24.6	24.6	21.4
282	30003	Montana	Big Horn	at large	35.3	29.2	26.8
283	30005	Montana	Blaine	at large	27.7	28.1	26.2
284	30035	Montana	Glacier	at large	35.7	27.3	26.2
285	30085	Montana	Roosevelt	at large	27.7	32.4	26.1
286	31173	Nebraska	Thurston	1	30.9	25.6	23.3
287	35003	New Mexico	Catron	2	25.6	24.5	21.2
288	35006	New Mexico	Cibola	2	33.6	24.8	30.1
289	35013	New Mexico	Doña Ana	2	26.5	25.4	26.3
290	35019	New Mexico	Guadalupe	2	38.5	21.6	22.6
291	35023	New Mexico	Hidalgo	2	20.7	27.3	24.8
292	35029	New Mexico	Luna	2	31.5	32.9	28.3
293	35031	New Mexico	McKinley	2,3	43.5	36.1	37.8
294	35033	New Mexico	Mora	3	36.2	25.4	22.6
295	35037	New Mexico	Quay	3	25.1	20.9	23.9
296	35039	New Mexico	Rio Arriba	3	27.5	20.3	28.9
297	35041	New Mexico	Roosevelt	2,3	26.9	22.7	25.7
298	35045	New Mexico	San Juan	3	28.3	21.5	23.1
299	35047	New Mexico	San Miguel	3	30.2	24.4	29.2
300	35051	New Mexico	Sierra	2	19.6	20.9	26.6
301	35053	New Mexico	Socorro	2	29.9	31.7	28.3
302	35055	New Mexico	Taos	3	27.5	20.9	22.8
303	36005	New York	Bronx	13,14,15,16	28.7	30.7	27.9
304	36047	New York	Kings	7,8,9,10,11,12	22.7	25.1	19.8

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
305	37013	North Carolina	Beaufort	3	19.5	19.5	22.0
306	37015	North Carolina	Bertie	1	25.9	23.5	27.2
307	37017	North Carolina	Bladen	7,9	21.9	21.0	20.7
308	37047	North Carolina	Columbus	7	24.0	22.7	23.1
309	37065	North Carolina	Edgecombe	1	20.9	19.6	25.5
310	37083	North Carolina	Halifax	1	25.6	23.9	28.1
311	37117	North Carolina	Martin	1	22.3	20.2	20.5
312	37131	North Carolina	Northampton	1	23.6	21.3	24.3
313	37147	North Carolina	Pitt	1,3	22.1	20.3	21.7
314	37155	North Carolina	Robeson	9	24.1	22.8	29.0
315	37177	North Carolina	Tyrrell	3	25.0	23.3	24.4
316	37181	North Carolina	Vance	1	19.6	20.5	23.4
317	37187	North Carolina	Washington	1	20.4	21.8	24.8
318	38005	North Dakota	Benson	at large	31.7	29.1	28.4
319	38079	North Dakota	Rolette	at large	40.7	31.0	27.1
320	38085	North Dakota	Sioux	at large	47.4	39.2	35.9
321	39009	Ohio	Athens	6,15	28.7	27.4	28.8
322	39105	Ohio	Meigs	6	26.0	19.8	19.9
323	39163	Ohio	Vinton	15	23.6	20.0	19.8
324	40001	Oklahoma	Adair	2	26.7	23.2	27.2
325	40015	Oklahoma	Caddo	3	27.8	21.7	21.1
326	40021	Oklahoma	Cherokee	2	28.8	22.9	21.2
327	40023	Oklahoma	Choctaw	2	32.7	24.3	26.3
328	40029	Oklahoma	Coal	2	27.4	23.1	22.1
329	40055	Oklahoma	Greer	3	23.4	19.6	25.9
330	40057	Oklahoma	Harmon	3	34.2	29.7	24.4
331	40061	Oklahoma	Haskell	2	27.1	20.5	20.4
332	40063	Oklahoma	Hughes	2	26.9	21.9	23.6
333	40089	Oklahoma	McCurtain	2	30.2	24.7	26.0
334	40107	Oklahoma	Okfuskee	2	29.4	23.0	24.2
335	40119	Oklahoma	Payne	3	21.7	20.3	23.8
336	40127	Oklahoma	Pushmataha	2	30.2	23.2	20.0
337	40133	Oklahoma	Seminole	5	24.0	20.8	22.1
338	40135	Oklahoma	Sequoyah	2	24.7	19.8	20.5
339	40141	Oklahoma	Tillman	4	22.9	21.9	23.0

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
340	42101	Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	2,3,5	20.3	22.9	25.3
341	45005	South Carolina	Allendale	6	35.8	34.5	36.7
342	45009	South Carolina	Bamberg	6	28.2	27.8	26.5
343	45011	South Carolina	Barnwell	2	21.8	20.9	27.7
344	45027	South Carolina	Clarendon	6	29.0	23.1	23.2
345	45029	South Carolina	Colleton	1,6	23.4	21.1	22.4
346	45031	South Carolina	Darlington	7	19.9	20.3	21.9
347	45033	South Carolina	Dillon	7	28.1	24.2	29.8
348	45049	South Carolina	Hampton	6	27.7	21.8	25.1
349	45053	South Carolina	Jasper	6	25.3	20.7	19.9
350	45061	South Carolina	Lee	5	29.6	21.8	25.8
351	45067	South Carolina	Marion	7	28.6	23.2	27.5
352	45069	South Carolina	Marlboro	7	26.6	21.7	28.0
353	45075	South Carolina	Orangeburg	2,6	24.9	21.4	24.4
354	45089	South Carolina	Williamsburg	6	28.7	27.9	26.8
355	46007	South Dakota	Bennett	at large	37.6	39.2	34.9
356	46017	South Dakota	Buffalo	at large	45.1	56.9	43.3
357	46023	South Dakota	Charles Mix	at large	31.4	26.9	24.9
358	46027	South Dakota	Clay	at large	24.6	21.2	20.2
359	46031	South Dakota	Corson	at large	42.5	41.0	42.4
360	46041	South Dakota	Dewey	at large	44.4	33.6	34.9
361	46071	South Dakota	Jackson	at large	38.8	36.5	36.2
362	46085	South Dakota	Lyman	at large	24.7	24.3	22.2
363	46095	South Dakota	Mellette	at large	41.3	35.8	38.0
364	46102	South Dakota	Oglala Lakota[c]	at large	63.1	52.3	41.5
365	46121	South Dakota	Todd	at large	50.2	48.3	50.4
366	46137	South Dakota	Ziebach	at large	51.1	49.9	56.7
367	47025	Tennessee	Claiborne	2	25.7	22.6	22.5
368	47029	Tennessee	Cocke	1	25.3	22.5	23.0
369	47049	Tennessee	Fentress	6	32.3	23.1	23.4
370	47061	Tennessee	Grundy	4	23.9	25.8	23.0
371	47067	Tennessee	Hancock	1	40.0	29.4	28.4
372	47069	Tennessee	Hardeman	7	23.3	19.7	23.0
373	47075	Tennessee	Haywood	8	27.5	19.5	20.6
374	47091	Tennessee	Johnson	1	28.5	22.6	24.3

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
375	47095	Tennessee	Lake	8	27.5	23.6	39.9
376	47151	Tennessee	Scott	3	27.8	20.2	22.8
377	48025	Texas	Bee	34	27.4	24.0	26.6
378	48041	Texas	Brazos	17	26.7	26.9	23.9
379	48047	Texas	Brooks	15	36.8	40.2	35.0
380	48061	Texas	Cameron	34	39.7	33.1	27.7
381	48063	Texas	Camp	4	22.5	20.9	20.3
382	48079	Texas	Cochran	19	28.3	27.0	24.8
383	48083	Texas	Coleman	11	24.9	19.9	25.2
384	48107	Texas	Crosby	19	29.5	28.1	22.3
385	48109	Texas	Culberson	23	29.8	25.1	22.1
386	48115	Texas	Dawson	11	30.5	19.7	21.7
387	48127	Texas	Dimmit	23	48.9	33.2	31.2
388	48131	Texas	Duval	15	39.0	27.2	28.6
389	48137	Texas	Edwards	23	41.7	31.6	22.6
390	48141	Texas	El Paso	16,23	26.8	23.8	21.0
391	48145	Texas	Falls	17	27.5	22.6	27.6
392	48153	Texas	Floyd	13,19	27.1	21.5	20.2
393	48163	Texas	Frio	23	39.1	29.0	27.9
394	48169	Texas	Garza	19	23.1	22.3	25.3
395	48191	Texas	Hall	13	29.1	26.3	24.0
396	48207	Texas	Haskell	19	20.8	22.8	20.6
397	48215	Texas	Hidalgo	15,28,34	41.9	35.9	29.5
398	48225	Texas	Houston	8	25.6	21.0	22.3
399	48247	Texas	Jim Hogg	15	35.3	25.9	27.3
400	48249	Texas	Jim Wells	34	30.3	24.1	23.7
401	48255	Texas	Karnes	15	36.5	21.9	22.1
402	48271	Texas	Kinney	23	28.6	24.0	20.1
403	48273	Texas	Kleberg	34	27.4	26.7	25.5
404	48275	Texas	Knox	13	23.6	22.9	20.6
405	48279	Texas	Lamb	19	27.1	20.9	20.0
406	48283	Texas	La Salle	23,28	37.0	29.8	29.2
407	48315	Texas	Marion	4	60.6	22.4	22.8
408	48323	Texas	Maverick	23	50.4	34.8	27.0
409	48327	Texas	Menard	11	31.1	25.8	20.6

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
410	48347	Texas	Nacogdoches	1	25.2	23.3	23.9
411	48371	Texas	Pecos	23	29.6	20.4	20.6
412	48377	Texas	Presidio	23	48.1	36.4	23.4
413	48389	Texas	Reeves	23	28.8	28.9	25.1
414	48405	Texas	San Augustine	1	29.7	21.2	21.6
415	48427	Texas	Starr	28	60.0	50.9	32.0
416	48445	Texas	Terry	19	25.5	23.3	21.5
417	48463	Texas	Uvalde	23	31.1	24.3	20.5
418	48465	Texas	Val Verde	23	36.4	26.1	21.4
419	48479	Texas	Webb	28	38.2	31.2	27.3
420	48489	Texas	Willacy	34	44.5	33.2	35.0
421	48505	Texas	Zapata	28	41.0	35.8	30.0
422	48507	Texas	Zavala	23	50.4	41.8	31.6
423	49037	Utah	San Juan	3	36.4	31.4	25.9
424	51027	Virginia	Buchanan	9	21.9	23.2	27.9
425	51051	Virginia	Dickenson	9	25.9	21.3	25.0
426	51105	Virginia	Lee	9	28.7	23.9	28.2
427	51121	Virginia	Montgomery	9	22.1	23.2	23.0
428	51195	Virginia	Wise	9	21.6	20.0	23.3
429	51540	Virginia	Charlottesville city	5	23.7	25.9	20.3
430	51620	Virginia	Franklin city	3	20.6	19.8	20.8
431	51660	Virginia	Harrisonburg city	6	21.5	30.1	23.3
432	51720	Virginia	Norton city	9	26.7	22.8	22.3
433	51730	Virginia	Petersburg city	4	20.3	19.6	21.8
434	51750	Virginia	Radford city	9	32.2	31.4	28.6
435	51760	Virginia	Richmond city	4	20.9	21.4	24.0
436	53047	Washington	Okanogan	4	21.5	21.3	20.4
437	53075	Washington	Whitman	5	24.2	25.6	21.4
438	54001	West Virginia	Barbour	1	28.5	22.6	21.2
439	54005	West Virginia	Boone	3	27.0	22.0	21.4
440	54007	West Virginia	Braxton	2	25.8	22.0	22.5
441	54013	West Virginia	Calhoun	2	32.0	25.1	24.8
442	54015	West Virginia	Clay	2	39.2	27.5	27.3
443	54017	West Virginia	Doddridge	1	23.0	19.8	20.1
444	54019	West Virginia	Fayette	3	24.4	21.7	22.3

Count	FIPS Geographic Identification Code	State	County	Congressional District(s) Representing the County[a]	Poverty Rate 1989 (1990 Census)	Poverty Rate 1999 (Census 2000)	Poverty Rate 2017, from SAIPE
445	54021	West Virginia	Gilmer	1	33.5	25.9	26.6
446	54043	West Virginia	Lincoln	3	33.8	27.9	25.7
447	54045	West Virginia	Logan	3	27.7	24.1	29.2
448	54047	West Virginia	McDowell	3	37.7	37.7	31.7
449	54053	West Virginia	Mason	3	22.1	19.9	20.2
450	54055	West Virginia	Mercer	3	20.4	19.7	21.0
451	54059	West Virginia	Mingo	3	30.9	29.7	31.0
452	54087	West Virginia	Roane	2	28.1	22.6	21.2
453	54089	West Virginia	Summers	3	24.5	24.4	28.8
454	54097	West Virginia	Upshur	2	21.2	20.0	22.7
455	54099	West Virginia	Wayne	3	21.8	19.6	20.4
456	54101	West Virginia	Webster	3	34.8	31.8	28.1
457	54103	West Virginia	Wetzel	1	20.5	19.8	20.6
458	54109	West Virginia	Wyoming	3	27.9	25.1	25.7
459	55078	Wisconsin	Menominee	8	48.7	28.8	27.6
460	56001	Wyoming	Albany	at large	19.8	21.0	19.5

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Census 2000, 2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, and Nation-Based Relationship File for Congressional Districts and Counties (116th Congress).

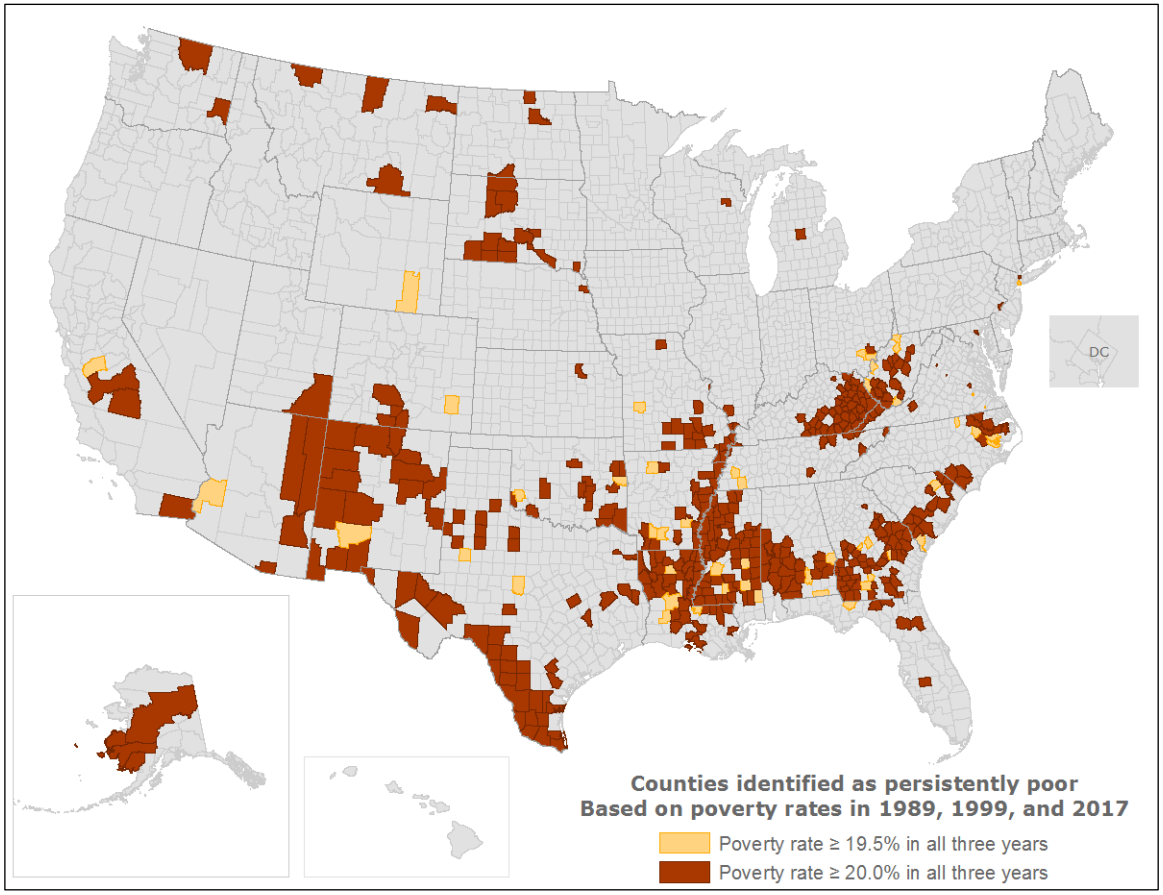
Notes: FIPS: Federal Information Processing Standard.

a. Numbers are ordinal, referring to the name of the congressional district(s) present in the county. For example, Barbour County, Alabama, is represented by Alabama's 2nd Congressional District (indicated by the 2). A congressional district may span multiple counties; conversely, a single county may be split among multiple congressional districts. Part of Clarke County, Alabama, for example, is represented by Alabama's 1st Congressional District (indicated by the 1) and part by the 7th Congressional District (indicated by the 7). Counties labeled "at large" are located in states that have only one member of the House of Representatives for the entire state.

b. Changed name and geographic code effective July 1, 2015, from Wade Hampton Census Area (02270) to Kusilvak Census Area (02158).

c. Changed name and geographic code effective May 1, 2015, from Shannon County (46113) to Oglala Lakota County (46102).

Figure 1. Persistent Poverty Counties Using Two Rounding Methods, Based on 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates



Source: Created by Congressional Research Service (CRS) using data from U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Census, Census 2000, and 2017 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

Appendix. Details on the Data Sources

Decennial Census of Population and Housing, "Long Form"

Poverty estimates are computed using data from household surveys, which are based on a sample of households. In order to obtain meaningful estimates for any geographic area, the sample has to include enough responses from that area so that selecting a different sample of households from that area would not likely result in a dramatically different estimate. If estimates for smaller geographic areas are desired, a larger sample size is needed. A national-level survey, for instance, could produce reliable estimates for the United States without obtaining any responses from many counties, particularly counties with small populations. In order to produce estimates for all 3,143 county areas in the nation, however, not only are responses needed from every county, but those responses have to be plentiful enough from each county so that the estimates are meaningful (i.e., their margins of error are not unhelpfully wide).

Before the mid-1990s, the only data source with a sample size large enough to provide meaningful estimates at the county level (and for other small geographic areas) was the decennial census. The other household surveys available prior to that time did not have a sample size large enough to produce meaningful estimates for small areas such as counties. Income questions were asked on the census long form, which was sent to one-sixth of all U.S. households; the rest received the census short form, which did not ask about income. While technically still a sample, one-sixth of all households was a large enough sample to provide poverty estimates for every county in the nation, and even for smaller areas such as small towns. The long form was discontinued after Census 2000, and therefore poverty data are no longer available from the decennial census. Beginning in the mid-1990s, however, two additional data sources were developed to ensure that poverty estimates for small areas such as counties would still be available: the American Community Survey (ACS), and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program (SAIPE).

American Community Survey (ACS)

The ACS replaced the decennial census long form. It was developed to accommodate the needs of local government officials and other stakeholders who needed detailed information on small communities on a more frequent basis than once every 10 years. To that end, the ACS questionnaire was designed to reflect the same topics asked in the census long form.

In order to produce meaningful estimates for small communities, however, the ACS needs to collect a number of responses comparable to what was collected in the decennial census.[15] In order to collect that many responses while providing information more currently than once every 10 years, the ACS collects information from respondents continuously, in every month, as opposed to at one time of the year, and responses over time are pooled to provide estimates at varying geographic levels. To obtain estimates for geographic areas of 65,000 or more persons, one year's worth of responses are pooled—these are the ACS one-year estimates. For the smallest geographic levels, which include the complete set of U.S. counties, five years of monthly

[15] A sample of approximately 18.3 million households received the Census 2000 long form. Scott Boggess and Nikki L. Graf, "Measuring Education: A Comparison of the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey," presented at Joint Statistical Meetings, San Francisco, CA, August 7, 2003. http://census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2003/acs/2003_Boggess_01_doc.pdf.
From 2012 to 2016, 17.7 million housing unit addresses were sampled in the ACS. http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/sample-size-and-data-quality/sample-size/index.php.

responses are needed: these are the ACS five-year estimates. Even though data collection is ongoing, the publication of the data takes place only once every year, both for the one-year estimates and the estimates that represent the previous five-year span.

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

The SAIPE program was developed in the 1990s in order to provide state and local government officials with poverty estimates for local areas in between the decennial census years. In the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (IASA, P.L. 103-382), which amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), Congress recognized that providing funding for children in disadvantaged communities created a need for poverty data for those communities that were more current than the once-a-decade census. In the IASA, Congress provided for the development and evaluation of the SAIPE program for its use in Title I-A funding allocations.[16]

SAIPE estimates are model-based, meaning they use a mathematical procedure to compute estimates using both survey data (ACS one-year data) and administrative data (from tax returns and numbers of participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP). The modeling procedure produces estimates with less variability than estimates computed from survey data alone, especially for counties with small populations.

Guidance from the U.S. Census Bureau, "Which Data Source to Use"[17]

> The CPS ASEC[18] provides the most timely and accurate national data on income and is the source of official national poverty estimates, hence it is the preferred source for national analysis. Because of its large sample size, the ACS is preferred for subnational data on income and poverty by detailed demographic characteristics. The Census Bureau recommends using the ACS for 1-year estimates of income and poverty at the state level. Users looking for consistent, state-level trends before 2006 should use CPS ASEC 2-year averages.
>
> For substate areas, like counties, users should consider their specific needs when picking the appropriate data source. The SAIPE program produces overall poverty and household income 1-year estimates with standard errors usually smaller than direct survey estimates. Users looking to compare estimates of the number and percentage of people in poverty for counties or school districts or the median household income for counties should use SAIPE, especially if the population is less than 65,000. Users who need other characteristics such as poverty among Hispanics or median earnings, should use the ACS, where and when available.
>
> The SIPP[19] is the only Census Bureau source of longitudinal poverty data. It provides national estimates and since the 2004 Panel, provides reliable state-level estimates for select states. As SIPP collects monthly income over 3 or 4 year panels, it is also a source of poverty estimates for time periods more or less than one year, including monthly poverty rates.

[16] Details about the origins of the SAIPE project are available on the Census Bureau's website at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saipe/about/origins.html.

[17] Downloaded from http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources.html, November 29, 2016.

[18] *Author's note:* CPS ASEC: Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

[19] *Author's note:* SIPP: Survey of Income and Program Participation; mentioned here only as part of a quotation.

Table A-1 below reproduces the Census Bureau's recommendations, summarized for various geographic levels:

Table A-1. U.S. Census Bureau's Guidance on Poverty Data Sources by Geographic Level and Type of Estimate

	Cross-Sectional Estimates			
Geographic Level	**Income/Poverty Rate**	**Detailed Characteristics**	**Year-to-Year Change**	**Longitudinal Estimates**
United States	CPS ASEC	CPS ASEC/ ACS 1-year estimates for detailed race groups	CPS ASEC	SIPP
States	ACS 1-year estimates	ACS 1-year estimates	ACS 1-year estimates/ CPS ASEC 2-year averages[a]	SIPP for select states[b]
Substate (areas with populations of 65,000 or more)	ACS 1-year estimates/ SAIPE for counties and school districts	ACS 1-year estimates	ACS 1-year estimates / SAIPE for counties and school districts	None
Substate (areas with populations less than 20,000)[d]	SAIPE for counties and school districts/ ACS using 5-year period estimates for all other geographic entities/ Census 2000	ACS 5-year estimates/ Census 2000	SAIPE for counties and school districts/ ACS using 5-year period estimates for all other geographic entities[c]	None
State-to-Nation comparison	CPS ASEC	CPS ASEC	CPS ASEC	SIPP for select states[b]

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS) formatted reproduction of table by U.S. Census Bureau, with an expansion to the notes. Original table available at http://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty/guidance/data-sources.html.

Notes:

ACS: American Community Survey.

CPS ASEC: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

SAIPE: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

SIPP: Survey of Income and Program Participation.

a. Use CPS ASEC two-year averages when examining state trends that include years prior to 2000.

b. Reliable estimates are available for select states, generally the most populous 20 states, beginning in the 2004 Panel.

c. Use non-overlapping periods for ACS trend analysis with multiyear estimates. For example, comparing 2006-2010 ACS five-year estimates with 2011-2015 ACS five-year estimates is preferred for identifying change.

d. *Author's note:* Data for areas with populations of 20,000 to 65,000 persons previously had been produced using ACS three-year estimates, but are now only produced using the ACS five-year estimates. ACS three-year estimates are no longer produced (with 2011-2013 data as the last in the series). For details, see https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html.

Author Information

Joseph Dalaker
Analyst in Social Policy

Acknowledgments

The author is grateful for the assistance of Sarah Caldwell, Senior Research Librarian, for assistance with legislative research, and Calvin DeSouza, GIS Analyst, in creating the county map.

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.